714 827 The ni, which animates the body, is visible during the weeks following birth in the movements of the fontanel. It is also the breath, the respiration, the beating of the arteries. Like the dya, it is not indissolubly bound to the body for it leaves it during sleep in order to go to the sixth sky, sunankaba. When the person awakens, the ni returns [828] to the body and the dream is considered a memory of what it has seen, a premonition of an event concerning the individual, the family, or the village (1).

[787]

1. Great numbers of fish seen in a dream foretell an abundant catch; quarrelling signifies war; to swim suggests purification for an offense. The passage of crickets from west to east is the sign of a great battle or famine. In this last instance, the situation is so serious that the village is forewarned and each one must make an offering to a needy person saying these words: "I make this soul sacrifice to God in order that he save me (nye nin ye ni sakaka ye ka ngala ma a la ka mbo)." The village chief also offers a collective sacrifice.

714 The dya, the double or twin of the human being and its opposite sex, has a body: either the shadow on the ground or the image in the water. It may move alone or be forced to leave the person it is accompanying under Faro's order. When a crocodile carries off or wounds a man by order of the spirit, he first seizes his visible shadow on the surface of the water and his dya in the water. The same thing may be attempted by someone with evil intentions. In such a case the close contact which the dya as a shadow maintains with the impure earth makes it particularly vulnerable. In order to remedy this, the person concerned must look at himself in the water contained in a gourd; then, when his image is clear, he clouds it by tipping the receptacle; this puts the dya under Faro's protection.

/60/ The independence and vulnerability of the dya require, in the course of certain religious functions, that it be taken over by Faro for the duration of the ceremony.

Wild and domestic animals are endowed with a ni and a dya. Plants also have a ni. The ni of trees is situated in the buds and insures its growth and its life; that of cereals necessary to human life

774 is the object of constant concern during agrarian rituals. The role of the soul of plants is particularly noticeable in their medicinal uses. Drawing a remedy from a plant may cause its death, liberating its spiritual principles for the benefit of the sick man. Because of this, such an act is equated with a blood sacrifice.

With the exception of the ngovo tomato, plants have no dya. The shadow (suma) of a plant is not independent like that of a man or an animal. It exists only through light effects and its movements are caused by the air and the wind moving its leaves and branches. This is what the Bambara means when he says that the dya has a life of its own and depends on Faro, whereas the plant's suma depends on the spirit Téliko, master of the air.

774 An individual's dya can be known and his temperament and life possibilities assessed by measuring his shadow on the earth at noon. 787 The unit employed is the little finger, which is a corporeal symbol 804 of the person. If a pregnant woman is thus measured, the sex of the 843 child may be predicted.

774 When a boy or a girl gets married, it is said of them: a ye a dya [576] furu: "he (or she) has married his dya." For it is impolite to say that a person married anyone but his spiritual double. Besides, the union of the couple is repeated by the union of their dya which like themselves are of opposite sex. In olden times, male twins married the [595 851] same woman and the latter's dya was taken over by Faro in the Niger. The child she conceived was the son of both husbands.

589 Some men do not marry. This is true of the Soma, the religious 791 diviner attached to the major Bambara societies. Initiated in the course of a solitary sojourn in the bush, he left his dya with the invisible spirits. This is a prerequisite to the gift of double sight with which he is endowed as well as a protection against possible dangers to the dya when it remains in contact with the earth, or when it approaches other humans. The true spouse of the Soma is his dya: he may mate only with it on a fixed date when the spirits return it to him for this purpose. /61/

The tere

774 The tere was inflicted by Pemba on Mousso Koroni in order to diminish her power at the time he was pursuing her. This explains its complexity: it is at once the character of a man, his strength,

774 his consciousness, as well as that part of his being which, through the body, makes him sensitive to events. If man is vulnerable through his double, it is his tere that is affected by any breaking of taboos; it receives and submits to impurity.

826 The tere has its seat in the blood and the head (kun tere). It develops in the foetus in the course of gestation and is composed in part of the parents' tere to which is added that of the deceased person whose soul and double the child has inherited.

774 The appearance of the child's tere is determined by the old men
553 of the family in the course of the name-giving ceremony which takes
787 place publicly on the eighth day after birth. After carefully examining the child's hairline along the forehead, the manner in which his eyebrows join, the shape of his eyes (the seat of intelligence), mouth, hands, and feet, one of the old men present announces in a loud voice the revealing signs of his character. The position of these signs makes it possible to say whether a child has a good or a bad tere and to make predictions about his life. A slight bald spot on the middle of his head will make him a rich man; a wide and deep skull will make him a chief. The old man then swings the child in the direction of the four cardinal points above the family altars and gives him the first name of the deceased person whose ni and dya he has inherited. Some of the hair, shaved off shortly before, is then thrown into the Niger by the father who pronounces the name while facing the river. The gesture and the word are meant to entrust the tere to the spirit of the waters and to ask his protection. On the same day the blacksmith marks out on the child's face the scarifications that act on his tere, giving him strength, courage, and virtue.

774 As the child grows, certain of his physical peculiarities are inter-
787 preted as characteristics of his tere. If he grinds his teeth while
828 sleeping it means he will attack his parents; if he often takes hold of his left wrist with his right hand he will always be victorious. A girl who walks swinging her hands and throwing them behind and who raises dust with her feet while walking will destroy her husband's fortune. Some informants say that a person has several tere: /62/ one for his manner of walking, one for the way he carries his head, one for the shape of his limbs, and one for the breasts if the person is a woman (1).

1. The physical signs determining the tere are very numerous. On this subject see

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D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/," Notes africaines, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong tere. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The tere is the gaining of consciousness.

774 This aspect of the tere means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals
825 "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a tere." All that lives independently of man is without a tere. (1)

1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several tere for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

The tere of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad tere; it is said to be its duga fufa (2). Such a beast is undesirable in

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its tere.

774 The fact that the tere is that part of the person which suffers the
784 consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the outer world. The tere is disturbed when a taboo, tne, is broken. If
827 it is a good tere, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

778 Some boli are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor
782 and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect the life of the community.

778 The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the boli
782 and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/
784 of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those responsible and by those officiating. The boli are generally placed in a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible. This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos which would affect the integrity of the boli as well as that of its owners. The handling of the boli, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests, to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of
[822] a red color are generally killed on the boli of religious societies, thereby increasing the nyama which they contain. White, the symbol of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

782 The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination.
787 The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body. The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

782 The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as "refreshment," since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment. Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

which they got rid of by means of this dye. A live swallow was immersed in the liquid, which was obtained by soaking the leaves and to which was mixed ground charcoal, and later was released, thus consecrating the dye into which the loincloth was soaked.

The next garment was made of two strips, dyo kama (literally, shoulder nets), which were hooked on to each arm. The strip on the right arm, representing male, was attached by three thin straps (male number). The other was attached by four straps, four and left being female. The wearer would lie down over the strip on the right side

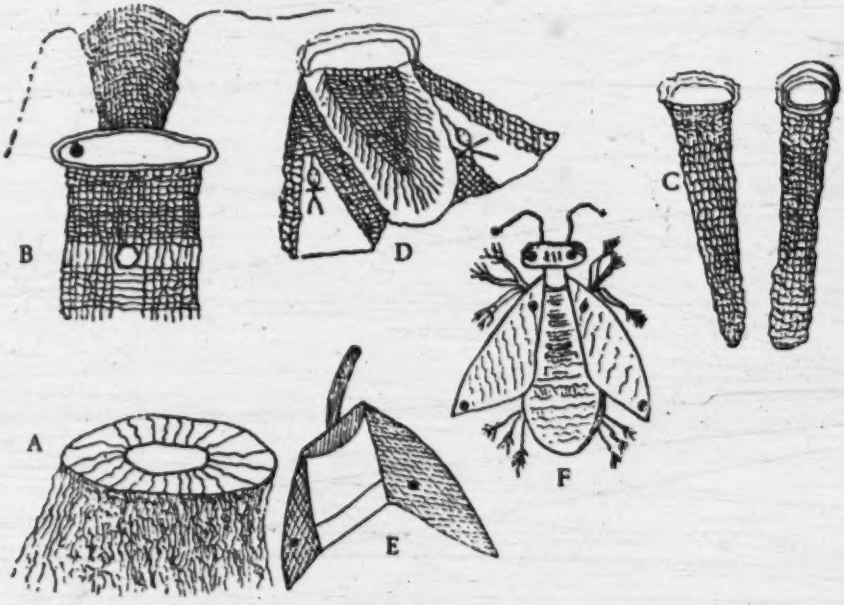

Fig. 8 — Ancient Clothing of the Bambara.

(A) The skirt of nyama fibers; (B) the loincloth; (C) the "shoulder nets"; (D) the tunic; (E) the bonnet are made of dyed and woven cotton threads. (F) the dung beetle, an insect which plays a part in geomancy. (Drawing by an informant).

and would cover himself with that on the left (Fig. 8, C).

Next, men made a kind of short tunic, wolo kama (literally, partridge wings), which was dyed red (Fig. 8, D). At the top of the openings where the arms passed were suspended /107/ two little figures (mani) carved out of wood. These represented the souls of the wearer, "took their life from the veins, and gave their strength to the

194 The ancestors are worshipped in various places: at the doors and
769 thresholds of houses, at the cemetery, and at stone altars placed at
778 the intersections of lanes and in public squares. These positive cults, which are aimed at the acquisition of beneficial forces, have as a counterpart, cults in which the villagers rid themselves of all their unlucky and infectious elements; these take place, in particular, at the corssroads, dangu, which are placed under the guardianship of the earth Soba spirits.

It would be impossible to treat all of the cults of the Bambara villages. Among these, three have caught our attention; they concern the dasiri, the dangu, and the ancestral altar stones.

A. The dasiri

194 The word dasiri (literally, which binds the mouth) designates the
776 invisible spirit, Faro's representative entrusted with watching over
778 /138/ the village, as well as the seat of this spirit and, sometimes too, the animal which accompanies it or symbolizes it.

The spirit haunts a rock, a thicket, or a tree situated near the village; the approaches to this spot are reserved for the elder in charge of the ritual (1).

[824] 1. In Massala and Soroba it is a baobab tree; in Sama, a tamarind tree, etc. See the observations on the dasiri collected by Ch. Monteil, Monographie de Djenné /Monograph of Djenne/, pp. 137-138; L. Tauxier. La Religion Bambara, pp. 195-208.

● [787 361] Generally the place is pointed out by the geomancer at the time the village is founded, or else determined by an event which occurred at that time. It is after this operation that the buildings are erected to the west of the chosen spot.

If the dasiri is a tree, no one may burn or cut its branches. In [822] many cases it cannot be approached by anyone dressed in black or indigo, colors which represent obscurity. No Peul may sit in its [563] shade (2). Any infraction of these taboos brings about the death of

2. The reasons for the taboo concerning the Peul have not yet been ascertained.

It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in particular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually used.

But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one resorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares, the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

"the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

794 796 jigi la, e komo fare ma e bwora dyeni ma, e bwora soma moriba, o ya di dyeni ma, oy a di numu dew ma dyenuye komo tigiw ye, makanta jigi, soma moriba, numu dew; oluw ma malo, aw kana malo, oluw ma lebu, aw kana lebu.

E komo ni nyenama biribalyuw dyugu, birilew nyima i dyugu son ta i la ka bye ta mbi ko nti nye.

E komo, i su klo la faba, nyenemaw kasange, minya kila a ko la, mi ma kila a ko la.

When the drums beat and the dances are animated, and when the masker cries, it is said that "the bara of the komo is hot" (komo bara wusule do). The ceremony is in full swing.

Diverse incidents may occur in the course of the masked dances which give rise to interpretations and interventions by the members.

794 796 787 When one of the arrows attached to the mask trembles, it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the assembly. The elders remove the arrow and immediately order /163/ the ceremony to stop. After the drums have been silenced, they request the culprit to present himself, which he immediately does. These words are spoken to him: "Your arrow attacks you" (1). He then offers a ram and beer in sacrifice,

1. Komo bye bila.

while the arrow is replaced and the dances resume. If an arrow falls in the course of the dance it indicates the presence of a sorcerer in the village.

794 796 If a part of the costume falls off, it is picked up by three members and kept to be burned with the refuse that is later swept up (2).

2. See p. 259.

794 796 688 If one of the participants has broken the taboo and revealed the secrets of the Komo during the past year, the masker whistles, asks the drummers to stop playing, and says: "Here is a grasshopper for me." These words express the contempt in which he holds the culprit. Next he adds: "There is the smell of a corpse here" (3).

304 The foreskin, which is tied by a string (drawn at the center of the
532 blade) at the moment of the operation, is placed upon the pembele
413 (black rectangle) and the cutting knife is tapped with a small wooden mallet, gossilã (drawn at the tip of the knife). These three figures receive during operation the offering of the first spurt of blood from the circumcised boy.

The line, which crosses the blade along the middle, separates the bird and the ancestors who gave proof of courage from the instruments used for the circumcision. As a division it symbolizes first of all that each grade of circumcised boys must be considered apart from the others. This is its social meaning. But the delicacy of the line itself has a meaning which applies to the individual: each one must, in his own image, be morally /183/ simple, just, and sensitive. By conforming to the rule symbolically indicated by the design, the individual will become a member of the elite.

304 The date of the operation is fixed when Mousso Koroni's star, sigi
● 787 dolo (Sirius), rises in the evening at a certain point in the east (1).
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1. See note 1 p. 47. To determine the date, however, the ndomo society may be consulted, which sometimes postpones it to keep its members longer.

After the boys to be operated have been counted, each gets ready, and on the appointed day the mother washes her son's penis with water in which an iron axe or hoe has been soaked. Then she prepares a dish
[262] of rice, ye farina to "dish of man's bravery," which the child eats before he is led to the place of the operation, called yorola sakole "reserved place," located in the bush.

304 When all are gathered together the blacksmith-circumciser operates
326 upon each one in turn after he has made them sit down in a circle on the ground. Pulling and twisting the foreskin, he ties it with the string which he keeps taut by securing its extremity between his toes. He next places the member upon the pembele, rests the knife /on the foreskin/ and taps /it/ with the wooden mallet. In this way he cuts off the foreskin while saying the following words:

"Circumcised one, your father, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, the father of that one too, the ear (the genitals) of the ancestors of the latter have withstood (the pain); you, yourself, withstand it as

69 2. M fa faro n so ma bana a dyanza ye kle saba kono ye; ni ye se i ka seki, muso kono ma.

The offering of food is then renewed every three days until a birth brings about the return of the double into the world of the living.

If the dead man has no descendants, his altar remains forever in the sanctuary of the Komo near the nimara boli. Otherwise, it is returned within seven days to the eldest son or to the brother who then becomes the head of the family.

769 During the night following the seventh day, the soul returns to eat
775 and drink in the hut of the widow who lives alone. All the dishes containing water or food are therefore carefully emptied and cleaned. The same meal is offered to the deceased the night following the fortieth day after the death. The widow comes out of her house on the [765] eighth day if she is poor and must work for a living; otherwise, on the forty-first day.

At the end of a variable period of time, the soul, the double, and the name of the deceased are received by a child who is born into the family. The exuvia, mana or folo of the soul, remains in the sanctuary of the Komo as a permanent testimony to his existence on earth. It is conserved by Faro who watches over it, and maintained by the offerings of the living who will in this way bring it to the final resurrection.

When the deceased does not belong to the Komo society, the rites are celebrated over the altars of the societies to which he belongs; his soul is likewise conserved by them. The spiritual principles /195/ of the women, grouped in institutions comparable to those of men, called muso dye, are the object of the same attentions in which is found the rhythm of four days, the female number.

766 If the deceased was too poor for all the rituals, which are always costly, to be observed, two gourds of water are prepared and placed one at the head, the other at the feet of the corpse; he is then lifted in such a way that his image is reflected in the water. This accomplished, eight cowrie shells are placed at his head and eight at his feet and the gourds are covered with a winnowing tray; the image thus conserved is supposedly reflected in the kaba mana, the fourth sky, where Faro,
776 symbolized by the cowrie shells, passes judgment on its state of purity.
787 A divining rite is then performed. If the man is pure, the villagers

attend his burial despite the fact that the rituals have not been performed. If not, he is abandoned to the care of his family.

To neglect the rituals assuring life in the beyond and the security of the living causes the shadow su dya, or the ghost su kere dye (literally, white side of the dead man), to arise and present itself under the same which the dead man had on earth, to claim his due from his descendants.

Ancestor Cult

In the entryway of some residences a supporting stake (cɛ̌ dloma), sometimes marked by seven notches, represents the founding ancestor of the family. On the anniversary of his death the stake is oiled "to refresh his soul." In addition, each year the owner of the house sacrifices to all the ancestors on the family altar, on the stake, and on the threshold of the door. In some villages the ancestors are called upon by tapping the threshold with a little wooden hammer, dyele kala ni, which represents them.

In the courtyards, pieces of wood stuck in the ground (jigi semen dloma) represent the paternal uncle, the brother of the founder, and are used as seats for the heads of families who lean against them "in order to lean well upon the traditions." Farmers, before leaving for the fields, rub their hoes on them to show them to the ancestors.

Before planting the women give the head of the family a ball of raw millet, which he lines up to represent the dead according to age and rank. Then he gives them a pinch of the seed beginning with the one representing the most recent deceased and calling successively all the dead by name. The paste and the seeds are then put in water and the mash thus obtained is poured on the /196/ doorposts to the entryway of the family house upon which the blood of a sacrificial victim also is poured. When the planting time comes, the chief who has prepared the mash made with a few grains taken from the seeds distributes this to the women, beginning with the one who represents the oldest deceased. He asks the ancestors to watch over, during the germination period, the soul of the millet which will descend into the seed with the first rainfall. When the millet has reached maturity, the first seeds harvested are placed in a pot on the threshing floor where the grain will be threshed later, and are distributed to the women in the same manner as the time of planting, the oldest of the deceased having to receive the first of the seed.

766 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the
167 successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

766 Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

[187] If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

761 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a
766 proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed
[82] vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought.

1: Dieterlen--269 E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FA8 Bambara FA8

/210/ Chapter 8

DIVINATION

781 If we still find it difficult to isolate the general principles of divination among the Bambara, it is possible nevertheless to perceive identical elements among its diversified aspects. As soon as we approach the mechanisms and the symbols employed by the diviners, it appears that the first and fundamental element of divination is the "word," the creator of life, the motivation of the cosmos, and the power of Faro.

To foresee the future is to reveal to the secular the "word" which is situated in space as well as in time, and which is the will and the material expression of that will. Destiny is understood as the realization of the designs of creation to which all must conform. To submit to this will is supreme wisdom. To inquire into the reason for a past state or event, or to determine the attitude to be taken in the face of future states or events, is what the wise man can and must do.

The supernatural powers, rightful masters of the word, alone have to power to reveal it. They have done this in mythical times for all men by teaching them technologies capable of reparing the repeated disorders brought about in the process of creation. They do this for each individual if he is in need of it and if he knows how to read through the various methods of gaining knowledge which they have put at his disposal. It is therefore to them that the diviner addresses himself in order that the word be communicated.

781 801 Which will be the privileged signs over which the diviners will bend their efforts? It appears that these are numbers, notably the first twenty-two. In fact, all aspects of physical and moral life are inscribed in them. Taken as a whole, they reflect the succession of events in space and in time. A complex symbolism, which is superimposed over the others, is assigned to each one separately.

Each number has one or several meanings appropriate to it. /211/ It is odd or even, a notion linked to that of duality which has been so frequently mentioned in the course of this work. The sum of several numbers also expresses a particular idea which is added to those recovered by each element. Finally, a value is attributed to the succession of numbers, which is the first expression of time (1).

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1. This expression is symbolized by the progression of the first four numbers in the preliminaries of creation. See p. 23.

The first 22 numbers, which represent the totality of "words" and which express the sum total of the Bambara's mystical knowledge, must be considered from different angles according to whether they are seen as the 22 fundamental elements of creation, the 22 elements of the domination of this creation by Pemba, or the 22 methods and periods of the reorganization of this creation by Faro. In this series appears clearly the classification of elements composing the human being, ni, dya, tere, according to dualism which is Faro's own character and principle of action.

Moreover the stages of time, which itself did not exist before his domination, are expressed by the succession of numbers, each of which is linked to a part of the myth.

Current divination utilizes the first 22 elements at the level where they express "the order and the word of Faro."

1. kele. Faro; the word. Number of the master of the word. District of the chief; the right of the eldest, the right of the first; the head. The conscience: psychical aspect, moral aspect.

2. fla. Original duality, twinness. Faro's two female twins, the two first human twins. Love and friendship; union of beings. Necessity for man, however, to be straightforward in his action, not to follow two tracks.

3. saba. Sexual symbol of man and his soul. Birth of mixed twins, sons of the sinful Bozo women.

4. nani. Sexual symbol of woman and man's double (dya). Birth of a Bozo girl.

5. duru. Unlucky number composed of 4 (woman) and 1 (incompleteness). Miscarriage, failure, death. A stillborn child is called duru. However, it has an auspicious aspect and so signifies the universe (2).

2. See p. 24.

6. woro. Symbol of male twins (3 and 3). Lucky number (3).

3. Dɛ̀ke ni fla ye gariseke ye, "two little male twins, that is luck."

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7. wolõfla. Symbol of mixed twins (3 and 4). Complete man possessing the ni and dya of opposed sexes. Complete world; growth /212/ of nature. Ideal image of creation; perfect word.

8. sekin. Symbol of female twins (4 and 4), of the eight ancestors and their word. Excess of words; danger of this excess caused by women.

9. konoto. Symbol of character or tere. Incompleteness.

10. tã̄. Composed of 6 (male twins) and of 4 (female birth), it is a lucky number and expresses the fertility desired by Faro as well as Faro himself.

11. tã̄ ani kele. Conflict and debate. During the eleventh period after Faro's domination, Téliko wanted to resist.

12. tã̄ ani fla. Téliko's attempt to dominate the world and to connive with men.

13. tã̄ ani saba. Composed of 3 (Téliko, male spirit) and 10 (Faro): expresses Faro's opposition to Téliko's domination.

14. tã̄ ani nani. Téliko's voyage.

15. tã̄ ani duru. Téliko's defeat.

16. tã ani woro.
17. tã ani wolõfla.
18. tã ani sekin.
19. tã ani konoto.

} Faro's work in organizing the universe.

20. muka. Meeting of Faro and Téliko to decide on the order and progress of the universe.

21. duka ani kele. Faro's complete domination over creation.

22. muka ani fla. Total of the periods elapsed between the creation and the organization of the world. Conclusion and "end of the words."

The symbolism of numbers in everyday life comes into play every time they occur. From the beginning they were used to qualify tools and utensils. According to whether these belonged to men or women, they were marked respectively with three or four easily recognizable signs, indicating their ownership. Thus, in weaving, the shuttle carried three bobins, the spindle four lines.

Each ritual is repeated three times in the case of a man, four times in the case of a woman. If it is performed several days running or at regular intervals, the same rhythm is observed. Thus the dya of a drowned man is fed every three days, or every four days in the case of a drowned woman. The organization of the chief's district

787 and the priesthood is founded on the same laws. A religious chief is
801 generally accompanied by two aides or two elders belonging to his age grade. The group they compose is a duplication of the first three of the eight original ancestors.

Seven, the expression of perfect creation appears notably in the repetition of Faro's name when a request is addressed to him relating to fertility which may by symbolized /213/ by a male-female couple whose number is seven. To say Faro's name alerts him, but to repeat it seven times makes him hear that which may best satisfy him and presents him with what he desires.

Eight is the number of the ancestors who received the word and of the families that spread it. Six and eight, images of male and female twins, are at the basis of the Bambara system of numbers and calculations (1). Ten, which repeats unity, is composed of the sum of the

1. See p. 48, n. 1.

first four numbers marking the stages of creation; it represents Faro (2). Twenty-two, which determines the categories of the creative

2. "The religious function of the decade plays an extremely important role among the Bambara because the symbolism of all numbers is included in it as it contains them all. Since it can be made up by the sum of the first four numbers which in themselves express the unity and duality of the being, masculinity and femininity, the fourfold nature of twins, the very essence of existence—in a word the decade—expresses all that which is achieved within oneself, all that which is complete, perfect, and just. The very name of ten, tā, indicates these notions; moreover, instead of tā, ten, the Bambara often say dafare, "it is complete." Consequently, ten is the essential symbol of divinity." S. de Ganay, "Notes sur la théodicée bambara," p. 198.

787 801 thought yo, represents the universe; it is found on all sanctuaries or ritual objects.

Inversely, a number may be attached to an individual because of his behavior. It is said of a wicked man that he is an "eleven." The person who wishes to take power when he has no right to is "twelve." A man who is disgraced because he is denied that which he asks for is "thirteen."

787 Another fundamental element of the divining technique is derived from the state and qualities of the diviner. In order to question the supernatural, no special quality is ordinarily needed other than that normally required of a person making a sacrifice. Thus any Bambara, before making his offering, throws a kola nut on the ground to interpret its position. But the diviner is in a peculiar position. His spiritual elements, constantly in touch with the divinity, are the object of precautions which introduce him into the supernatural cycle and permit him to hear its message. They are, therefore, protected from the impurity which they might acquire in their contact with ordinary men. Because of this, the diviner is forced to respect a certain number of taboos. His double, guarantee for his state, is preserved by the spirits which protect it on the one hand and excercise control over its owner on the other. It is for them a means of action. "If the diviner has received the word and makes a mistake, the spirits may cause him to die." His mouth is filled up /214/ with a force which comes to him from these powers and which he must not misuse.

On the other hand, the trance is the state in which the spiritual is best expressed. In the excitement of the dance, at the frenetic rhythm of the drums, the Komo divines and predicts. At this moment he is entirely under the influence of the spiritual beings which express themselves through him.

Having presented these different points, is it possible in the present state of the inquiry to classify the methods of divination we have observed among the Bambara? This classification which we will attempt is tentative, and the observations will have to be taken up again more profoundly.

A brief description of several methods of divination currently in use is given below, and two of the techniques we have studied more carefully will be explained in detail: divination by guitar playing and divination by throwing cowrie shells (1).

787

1. In this chapter we purposely do not approach the study of geomancy, which is reserved for later treatment. This mode of divination has been the object of a detailed description in C. Monteil, La Divination chez les Noirs de l'Afrique occidentale française /Divination among the Blacks of French West Africa/. Geomancy is currently used by the Bambara, by all the chiefs of religious societies, and by all the hunters who are familiar with several types, particularly the nama ti "sign of the hyena," the timba ti "sign of the aardvark," and the tyɛ dyɛ "white truth" or trabu. The symbols connected with this type of divination are very complex among the Bambara who state that they possess an autochthonous method of geomancy distinct from the type called "Moslem," with which they are also familiar. This last point seems to be confirmed by the observations gathered by B. Maupoil in Dahomey and explained in his conclusions (see La Géomancie à l'ancienne côte des Esclaves /Geomancy on the Old Slave Coast/, p. 678). Geomancy is practiced in similiar ways on the whole African continent. More than any other activity, its study raises the problem of influences, notably that of Islam, with which we have dealt on page 7.

Methods of Divination Linked to the Idea of the Person

787 826 Knowledge of the person is a constant concern of the Bambara. The body, which supports the spiritual principles, is marked from birth by signs which any knowledgeable individual is capable of interpreting. They determine not only the character (tere) of a person but also, to a certain extent, the destiny that awaits him.

Thus by examining carefully the facial features of a newborn child, his hairline, the shape of his eyes, nose, and head, the lines on his

787 826 forehead, it is possible to predict to a great extent, what he will be or do in life. Later on /215/ the gait, the swinging of the arms, the way of placing the feet, of holding the head or the breasts will complete, for the informed people, the portrait sketched at birth.

Measurement of the dya

[804] Certain indications concerning the individual are also given by the double or twin (dya) (1) which materializes in the shadow of the body

1. See p. 86.

and is measured by using the little finger as a unit. Starting from the top of the head, this operation is undertaken at noon in the sun when the shadow is shortest. The measurements which are noted down are grouped alternatively by three, the male number, and by four, the female number, according to the following table:

1. The first three unit measures (little finger) represent the nerves, pasa (masc.).
2. From the fourth to the seventh, the soft parts, the flesh, bu (fem.).
3. From the eighth to the tenth, the bones, kolo (masc.).
4. From the eleventh to the fourteenth, the body liquids, dyi (fem.).
5. From the fifteenth to the seventeenth, the male genitals, wulu (masc.).
6. From the eighteenth to the twenty-first, the female genitals, bye (fem.).
7. From the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth, the joints, kolonye, (masc.).
8. From the twenty-fifth to the twenty-eighth, the breasts, ši (fem.).
9. From the twenty-ninth to the thirty-first, the backbone, koloko (masc.).
10. From the thirty-second to the thirty-fifth, the womb, dẽzo (fem.).
11. From the thirty-sixth to the thirty-eighth, the intelligence, hakili (masc.).

12. From the thirty-ninth to the forty-second, pettiness, stupidity, misenya, (fem.).
13. From the forty-third to the forty-fifth, judgment, calmness, basigi (masc.).
14. From the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth, incoherence, agitation, hakiliwuli (fem.).

[804] These groupings are symbolized by little sticks whose length increases for male measures and decreases for female measures.

Example: if the measure of the individual stops at group 7, he will be represented by four sticks (males) of increasing size and by three others (females) of decreasing size and different aspects.

/216/ Whatever their number, these sticks are then placed in the following manner: those of the nerves in a dry receptacle, those of the flesh in millet flour, those of the bones on a hard stone, those of the liquids in water, those of the male genitals on the testicles of a male goat, those of the female genitals on the vulva of a mare, those of the breasts in karite oil, those of the womb in water from the Niger or a well, those of the intelligence in fresh milk, those of calmness and judgment in water. On the stick representing the joints is shown the name for lion; on that representing the backbone, the word dyose, (literally, point of support); on that representing pettiness, the name for dung beetle; on that representing disorder and agitation, the words muso dãga (literally, accursed woman).

A prayer is recited over the sticks which are then grouped and counted with their numbered representation and their symbolism according to the complicated calculations whose details we will not enter upon here (1). This prayer and counting are called: faro

1. It must, nevertheless, be noted that the total of the signs is (7 x 3) + (7 x 4) or 49.

kanubaya, "love of Faro." They indicate his solicitude for his subjects and were supposedly revealed to men by the swallow messenger at the time of the first girl twins' birth.

Each of these measurements corresponds to a certain moral and physical behavior of man, predetermined by Faro before one's birth. It is therefore possible, by measuring the dya of a pregnant woman,

787 to know the sex of the child a woman is carrying and the character
826 which will be attributed to him by the spirit.
[843] Without further elaboration on this method of divination which implies a series of interpretations, it suffices to note that it is integrated into the system of Bambara thought and inspired by the conception he has of man's place in the universe.

Divination by the Kola Nut

787 The kola nuts which the Bambara eat and use in their sacrificial or divinatory rituals are classified into seven categories according to their form and color.

1. dangoro, red nut.
2. yeleworo, white nut.
3. sosokuworo (literally, mosquito head), a red nut pointed at one of its extremities.

/217/ 4. flaniworo (literally, twin kola), a white nut with the same signs on both its halves.

5. worodanda (literally, kola without a mouth), a nut of two colors without an apparent crack permitting it to be divided.
6. bassiworo, a dark red and very bitter nut.
7. nyeworo, a nut of light and indeterminate color.

The kola nut, "created for Faro's twin girls," is itself a symbol of duality, for both its adhering halves are easily separated. In daily life, unless the diviner has ordered it as a purification, a kola nut is not eaten by one person alone; it is divided and one of the halves given to a third person. This gesture of politeness and friendship is also the expression of the duality of man, comparable to that of the fruit itself.

[576] To give kola nuts is always a sign of deference, respect, or affection. To eat a white nut "chases away sorrow and worry." The nut without a crack is rarely eaten. As it appears to be of one piece, it has an inauspicious character. In religious ceremonies the bassiworo nuts are preferred for the boli; the ordinary red nuts, dangoro, for the other altars. The pointed nut, sosokuworo, is offered by one who wants a child. The officiator chews half the nut and spits it onto the altar before eating the other half.

187 Divination by the kola nut is practiced in numerous cases concerning the individual and the community. Moreover, it precedes almost all the sacrifices performed on the different altars. Before the throat of a victim is cut, the question of the consent of the beneficial power is posed. This method is used for spirits who are invoked by means of a recited prayer at the time the nut is divided but before it is thrown. The color and shape of the nut are chosen according to the question formulated, as well as according to the quality of the being whose mediation is sought. If the plea is addressed to Faro, for a marriage for instance, the nut must be white; if the spirits of the earth or the skies are questioned, it must be red; for a birth or a death and for all requests to the spirits of the west, the beneficial nut, yeleworo, is used. On the contrary, as a protection against an enemy or to convey a curse, the spirits of the east are invoked with the mouthless nut, worodanda. A good divining nut must, in addition, show a kind of design, called yeleda (literally, mouth for laughing, at the intersection of the two pieces composing it. It is also fitting that it be /218/ pointed at one extremity to "prick the subject" benefiting from the ritual. The officiator, who has divided the nut lengthwise into two parts following its natural dividing line, holds the two pieces in his hand and recites the following prayer:

"Faro, my mother, Faro, my father, spirits of the earth, spirits of the skies, spirits of the west, spirits of the east, you who are better than all of them, Faro, here are the kolas, let truth be unveiled, let the two (pieces) part at the top. I say, you, Faro" (ter) (1).

1. Ne ba faro ne fa faro du kuma ɲinew,
sãnfe ɲinew, klebi ɲinew, korona ɲinew
dyenin kausa na be ye, e faro, woro fle
tye ka banke fla ka dya safe; ngo e faro (ter).

He may also say more simply:

"Here are two kola nuts, if you refuse, may one be shut and the other open; if you accept, may both be open or may both be shut"(2).

2. Woro fla, fle ninye, ni ma sõ,
kele ka dyã, kele ka bri, ni sona a
fla ka dyã, fla ka bri.

787 This text determines the interpretation of the answer which will be given. The diviner next opens his hand, releases the pieces, and watches the way in which they fall on the ground: if they are arranged in the same way on the inner or outer sides, the answer is affirmative; it is negative.

Divination by Cowrie Shells

This practice is called: kolo nin fli, literally, "to throw the soul of the cowries." These shells are in no way different from those used for trade or ornamentation. Only one taboo is attached to the way in which they are acquired; they must not be bought or obtained without payment. To acquire them, the diviner must secure a loan called [426] kuma boli (literally, to come out of the word); he gives as surety a product or an object which will be reclaimed by him later when he returns the cowries.

The 22 cowries used summarize "that which is necessary to man" and are divided into three groups:

The first seven, teliko dɛ̃, sons of Téliko, represent the spirit of the air, Téliko and his children, as well as "the respiration" of men. In fact, it is said of them: "The Téliko spirits are the man's respiration" (1).

1. Teliko ye adamadɛ̃ ninakli kuma bo ye.

The next seven, faro dɛ̃, sons of Faro, symbolize human /219/ beings. One of them, chosen because it is easy to distinguish from the others, represents Faro; the diviner repeats the name of the spirit seven times over this shell before mixing it with the others, the effect being to give all of them the strength of the spirit.

The last eight, kumabana dɛ̃, sons of Koumabana, are the words of the eight great ancestors. One of them, different from the others, is called "mother of words." It is both Koumabana, first of the eight ancestors, and the unequaled word which he "spat" since Koumabana had known "all the words now existing on earth."

Thus 22, the expressions of the universe, summarize the human individual in the system of the 22 cowries: body and soul, Faro; breath and respiration, Téliko; revealed word, Koumabana. The division into three series, two of which are 7 and one 8, is also

181 significant; the number 7 is the sign of the complete man and it occurs twice to recall duality. Eight is the number of the word which animates him.

This type of divination is only performed during the day, for it is disrespectful to alert the spirits at nightfall. Moreover, the orientation of the shells on the ground is important and easier to observe by the light of the sun. The officiator takes the cowries in his hand, three or four times consecutively, according to the sex of the person consulting him, and lets them fall to the ground or onto a tray. He then studies them, following their orientation, and the place they occupy with relation to the mother or the "conclusion of words," according to their open or closed position. Very skilled diviners, who have to resolve complex problems, operate with 22 cowries. But sometimes the eight kumabana dɛ̃ are sufficient.

In this case, before throwing them, the diviner pronounces the following prayer:

"You, eight old ancestors, none has surpassed you in words, your vision was so great that it surpassed the number (of the others); the cowries are thrown, you will show the truth; I say, you, the eight elders, I say, you, good spirits" (1).

1. Aw moko korobaw sekin, moko ma se teme aw ka kuma na, aw ka somaya bonya ma, fo ka dama teme koloniw fle la, aw ka ntiɲɛ jira, ngo aw maw sekin, ngo jinew aw maw.

In the short space of time in which the cowries are thrown, destiny is written. The moment the diviner releases them, "the spirit of the air which controls them, having examined the case, adjudges and proposes. The moment they touch the ground, Faro, master of the last appeal, disposes" (2). The design of the cowries translates his

2. It is said colloquially: "Téliko proposes and Faro disposes," teliko ba singa, faro ba sinze.

word; they /220/ are the expression of his will visible to man through the word revealed by Koumabana. This whole delicate spiritual

787 mechanism, invisible for the ordinary person, unknown to the noninitiate, can be perceived by the seer and the diviner who are conscious of the fact that they are manipulating the divine with the cowries. Because of this they bend over the constantly renewed shape given to the dispersed material with a powerful feeling of the presence of the forces to whom they are appealing.

The Somaya

791 According to tradition, the somaya or science of the soma was revealed in Mandé, that is to say, it was known to the Bambara before their arrival in the territory which they now occupy. It was restricted to a few privileged persons. The gifts of clairvoyance which it presupposes may be discovered in a newborn baby at the time when the signs determining his character (tere) are examined by the elders during the name-giving ceremony. In early childhood frequent manifestations of suffering are a sign of the spirits' presence and from the first steps, the way of walking itself confirms the child's vocation. About the age of ten, the young boy "guided by the Téliko spirits" is attracted by them into the bush near a pond where he lives in their invisible company for several days.

After this retreat the child returns to his village, provided with a little stone (jinaworo, literally, kola nut of the spirits), a sign of the alliance he has contracted with them.

However, he pretends not to know the place he came from. He also never makes any statements concerning the gift of double sight with which he has been endowed, but does manifest it by making some unsolicited revelations about their future to those he encounters. After a time, people recognize by these signs his quality as a Soma, which implies a change in his spiritual principles: the dya remains under the protection of the Téliko spirits who also control the diviner; they act directly on his person and hold his health and life in their power, punishing him in case of an infraction or in case of disorders which are harmful to the exercise of his art (1).

1. A Soma would become a mahalakillen or a harmful animal if his dya were altered through contact with the impure earth.

791 The box is transpierced by two wooden sticks, če kala (literally,
534 man-stalk), recalling the two millet stalks which accompany every dead man into his grave and which are in themselves symbols of the two elders.

791 When the Soma falls ill, he removes the two sticks from his instru-
534 ment and places them beside him on his mat, anticipating the position
755 he will lie in the grave. Thus stretched out, "he is in the grave and walks with the two ancestors"; if his condition improves the sticks have liberated him from his illness. He replaces them in the harp only after his recovery.

791 The box contains seven pebbles, the number of man (3 + 4) and a
534 piece of copper in the shape of a star symbolizing the word. The Soma may look into the harp through an opening on its side, called šu wo (sorcery hole) or bara dinge (hole of the box), which "permits him to breathe," to see "the ancestor Koumabana, master of the word, and to know the deepest secrets." At the bottom of the instrument another opening, considered the anus, permits the release of all that is harmful.

/224/ A red stain placed on one of the faces, sindera ble (literally, red belt), expresses the fact that the instrument is the object of blood sacrifices like the stone jineworo.

The case is the image, the mask of Koumabana; the two faces, called respectively kini nye, "right eye," and numa nye, "left eye," represent his eyes; the comb, his mouth; the opening, his nose and respiration; the strings, his words. It is also the replica of the tomb and of the first three of the eight ancestors who knew death. Finally, it is the face of the Soma and his tomb.

The instrument must never be touched by a woman; moreover, no one must play it if his intentions are not pure, "if his heart is not clean."

791 When the Soma plays in response to requests from those who consult
533 him, each sound is a prayer. With his free hand he holds a twig with
781 which he strikes the base. Each stroke is a word. As he plays, images form before his eyes and within him. He touches the cords separately according to their position and in relation to the importance of the question that is being asked. Thus, he pinches modẽ for subjects of little importance: hunt, journey, etc.; fadẽ for that which is concerned with health, procreation, the physical or moral life of the individual; fa for the future, destiny, the private and public life of a man, his

791 authority, his command; fa koroke for planting and cultivation, the
533 control of water, rains, and ponds, and for fortune and wealth; fa
787 dogone for the germination of grains, the formation of the ears and the light rains; ba for all that concerns women; faso for all that concerns the family house and those who are absent.

But the Soma also plays airs with rhythms accompanied by words. He plays them one after the other during the sitting or choses them according to the character of the person consulting him and the questions raised.

The following seven songs were collected and interpreted by the Soma of Bandiagara:

"A good thing comes with a bad thing" (1). This song has the

1. Ko ñumã de bina ni ko dyugu ye.

effect of revealing to the Soma the thoughts of the consulter.

"Man knows little" (2). In spite of his learning a man knows few

2. Adama dɛ̃ te ko do.

things; a child often knows that which an adult ignores.

/225/ "Even when a man is satiated he may not go beyond the mother who has given him birth" (3). This rhythm is performed for

3. Mako fara čokočoko a tise ka temme a wolo ba ka.

those who show arrogance or vanity, or for those whose wife has left the conjugal home and has taken refuge with her father.

"Even if he is handsome, a man must have eyes (that is, to be informed)" (4). The Soma plays this air whenever there is a marriage,

4. Moko če kani čokočoko fo nɛ̃ ka soro i ku.

a birth, or an initiation.

"The world is big" (5). When anguish overwhelms the consulter,

5. Difɛ̃ ka bõ.

791 this song calms his restlessness and gives him back peace and serenity.
533 "Whatever man is, he may not go beyond God" (1). The Soma
787

1. Moko a kera ɲokoɲoko a te teme ngala ka.

plays this air if the consulter harbors bad intentions or if he is ignorant or stubborn. He does the same to discover the gifts of a child and to encourage the family to develop his learning.

"Joy embellishes the world" (2) is performed for futile and pleasant

2. Klo ye dĩne dya.

things: feasts and dances, ornaments.

787 Divination, in a large measure, is the application of the static
801 and dynamic quality of numbers. On the one hand these translate the relationships; on the other, they are symbols for phenomena, beings, behaviors, situations, and in general all the constituent parts of the universe. Though not endowed with power in themselves, they symbolize powerful and well regulated elements. It may also be said that the numbers are superior realities, the same as the primordial signs which preceded the perceptibility of all things and on account of which the things began to exist once man had taken them into his consciousness. (3)

3. See p. 17.

In the course of divination, they indicate to the individual or collective consulter his personal position with regard to the rest of the universe. In a way, they permit the formulation of a particular equation for each person at a given time.

CONCLUSION

121 /227/ It is only recently that the discipline of silence adhered to by the Blacks has been relaxed in certain circles of the initiates. Human behavior, backed up by a rigorous method, has allowed a group of researchers to establish a documentation which suffers less from the usual faults. It is no longer superficial or fragmentary; it is

774 it is a fluid emanated from the body itself and made manifest as much by the shadow, which may be seen in sunlight or in a bright light, as by the image which appears when the body is placed in front of a reflecting surface. This fluid is called dya.

774 787 The dya has the faculty of leaving the body when it is asleep to wander wherever it wishes; the sight of its wanderings, which the body can witness, constitutes a dream (sugo). Dream is a kind of reality; it is in a sense the private life of the dya in company with its fellow-dya. During waking hours, the dya accompanies the actions of the body; during sleep, the body must endure the dya's peregrinations; for there is no doubt but that the dya rules the body it inhabits. Thus, waking a person abruptly is virtually a criminal act because, if the dya is away [761] at the time, a too abrupt summons may break the link between the dya and the body, and such a rupture (sa) is death (sa). Besides, the body has only a vague memory of the wanderings of its dya, it experiences the consequences of this action. On awaking, the body is exhausted by all these mad rushing about and fantastic escapades, and it feels the effects of the dya's actions, either good or bad.

In short, this dya is comparable to what some Europeans call a "double."

775 Further, it appears that the dya plays a crucial role in the "return" (sagi) to life, that is, rebirth, which is one of the most strongly held beliefs of the Bambara. After death, the dya is reincarnated in the same families; the Bambara even claim to have positive proof of this fact. Such and such a newborn child has such and such anatomical peculiarity of the deceased -- is this not a proof that the deceased wanted to show thereby that he was re-embodied? If a child dies very young, the body is mutilated in some agreed manner -- a finger is broken, for instance -- [121] and if later a child is born in the family with a similar deformity, everyone is convinced that the dead child has "returned": a sagira, "he has returned."

It is also believed possible for a dead person to be reincarnated far from his own people. All over Bambara country stories are retold of dead people who, more or less long after

183 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the
784 native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social regulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the tne the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 Within the family, which is the generating force of any
593 collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (koro-u) and especially of their head (fa). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which constitute, in fact, family custom.

784 Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara
[571] collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the tne.

[133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 Mantic. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

787 alone and it applies to the future as well as to the present and the past.

787 Mantic differs from magic in that the latter allows man
788 to use certain methods so as to subordinate natural and extra-
791 natural forces, while the former is contemplative knowledge, which does not impinge on the prerogatives of the divine but merely puts divine thoughts into communication with human understanding.

Further, theoretically at least, the diviner is not linked to any particular cult and is not to be confused with the priest, since he transmits the divine will outside of sacrifice, which is the priest's function. However, it also sometimes happens that the diviner is the oracle of a particular divinity and that the same person combines the functions of both diviner and priest as in certain cults described in what follows.

787 There are innumerable methods of divination. Before pointing out the principal traits of some of them, let us first note that there are cases when the divinity enters into direct relationship with a human being and speaks to him in human language. The chronicle of Ségou gives an example, in the legend concerning Kolé, head of Biton's guards, who was approached by a genie in the forest and told of the conditions on which he would be assured of his power. Ngolo Diara cheated Kolé of the benefits of the revelation by carrying out the sacrifice required by the genie before Kolé got around to it.

Dreams in which events take place just as they do in reality constitute one method of direct revelation. Frequently, however, there is a variation between dream and reality [134] which makes the meaning of the dream uncertain and therefore makes an interpretation necessary. Among the Bambara there are people who act as diviners by interpreting their own dreams. On being consulted about a problem, they claim to receive in a dream during sleep the correct information for throwing light on the difficulties involved.

A favorite method is that in which the diviner abandons himself to his god: he is possessed by the god and becomes his oracle. In the trance he is, so to speak, the instrument through

787 which the god speaks. In the brotherhoods of which we shall presently speak, the wara-mina-den' is, as the term indicates, "possessed by the god"; he is also said to be "the mouth of the god" (wara da). However, the diviner can speak only unintelligible gibberish during trance, and so this half-human, half-divine language must be interpreted by the wara-tigi or high-priest. [198]

During dream or divine possession, the invisible is brought within man's reach by a sort of inner illumination; both methods may be said to be intuitive divination. Other methods, even more widely used, are based on a different procedure. These methods purport to penetrate the divine intention and will by observation of external signs. How do these signs differ from natural phenomena?

The native pays very little attention to what we call natural laws. He reasons by analogy and attributes any unfamiliar phenomenon to an invisible being endowed like himself with intelligence and will. The indications of this will are not precise, and it is up to each person to recognize and to interpret them. Divination based on external signs may be called deductive. The signs may be classified in two categories: those involving living beings and those involving inanimate objects. [811]

787 825 Living beings. Theoretically, any animal is useful for purposes of observation because its actions, whose determining cause is unknown to the ordinary man, reveal to the seer the divine will or intervention.

Observations of this kind have given rise to many taboos (tne). Here is an example: while crossing a [135] stream an ancestor of the Samaké was caught by a crocodile and carried down through the water to the creature's lair, where he was abandoned. It happened that the man was merely stunned and when he came to, he pondered how he might escape. Suddenly he felt some grains of sand fall on his face and, seeking the source, noticed that a thread of light came in through a tiny fissure in the rock. The grains of sand were coming through this crack, and he realized that an ant lion (gere) was throwing them in an effort to show him how to get out; so he managed to enlarge the crack enough to escape. But, remembering the insect to

787 825 which he owed his life, he vowed that he and his descendants would evermore respect it. That is why the gere is me for all the Samaké, the descendants of that ancestor.

Before beginning a fight with Blisi, Bacari Dyan, a Peul, wanted to know the outcome. A marabout told him to get two rams: "Name one Blisi and the other Bacari," he said," and watch them fighting." To be sure, during one of their combats, the ram named Bacari killed the one named Blisi and such, too, was the result of the fight between Bacari Dyan and Blisi.

But although a living animal can show the divine will through its actions, the dead body of one offered in sacrifice is no less informative. It is the duty of the seer or initiate to discover the signs of the divine will from the dying spasms, from the position taken by the body, or from the relative position of the entrails or the general constitution of each animal. This branch of mantic is called extispicy, from which are derived various methods of divination used by the Bambara.

It is common practice to sacrifice a chicken; if it falls on its back, with its feet extended away from the observer, the omens are thought to be unfavorable. If the feet point toward the observer, the omens are good. Any other position is doubtful and, if need be, the sacrifice is repeated until a categorical answer has been obtained.

Often enough a Bambara returning from a long journey wants to learn whether one or another of his wives has been faithful to him. He sacrifices a rooster and, after opening it, examines the scrotum; if it looks normal, the wife has been faithful, but if it shows [136] certain peculiarities, notably a reddish color, her guilt is proved.

787 Inanimate objects. Every Bambara possesses a set of divining cowrie shells. He almost always carries a stated number of shells -- usually 12 -- in a small bag. If he wants to consult the omens -- about the most varied sorts of enterprise -- he takes the cowries in hand and throws them onto the ground from a point not far above the ground. He reads the answer in the general arrangement of the group and also in the position of individual cowries relative to one another. If one cowrie is

787 surrounded by several others, this designates a powerful master surrounded by his proteges and promises aid. If one cowrie is stuck perpendicularly in another, that pattern is called "little girl in the gourd" and presages the birth of a girl. If two cowries are close together and turned in opposite directions, this is the symbol of sexual intercourse and presages the success of a love affair.

The kola nut is used as often as the chicken for divinatory offering. Here is how the method operates with respect to the nyana dugu-da-siri, of which we shall soon speak. After separating the nut into its two parts, the officiant brings them together again between his thumb and index finger and touches the ground with them, while asking the nyana to make known whether the offering is accepted. Then from a point not far off the ground, he casts the nut against, or a little in front of, that which is supposed to be the seat of the nyana. If the two parts both turn toward the officiant on the sides which were formerly in contact, the reply is favorable.

The officiant then repeats the proceedings in order to find out if the nyana agrees that he should make the offering. A new position, with one part turned toward the officiant and the other toward the ground, means that the answer is favorable once more. In case of doubt or failure, the process is repeated as many as three times.

[412] Stones are also used as intermediaries for divination. On top of a flat stone -- usually one used for crushing condiments [137] is placed another stone, also flat but smaller. After having reflected deeply upon the object of his inquiry, the diviner holds the smaller stone with his fingertips and guides it slowly over the surface of the larger stone. He then interprets any slight resistance that developes as the smaller stone is moved around.

There is another method very similar to the one just described. The diviner places a gourd filled with water on some kind of rag or straw crown which water-carriers, in particular, place on their heads beneath the vessel to be carried. He rocks the gourd gently to and fro and then, as before, interprets the resistance produced.

787 With the same equipment the diviner sometimes operates differently. Setting the gourd firmly on the crown that supports it, he then taps it two or three times with his middle finger. Then, it is claimed, he can hear special sounds, which are revelations by the water-spirit and which he alone can understand.

In short, there is an endless number of divining practices and here, if anywhere, the old saw which says that the spirit blows where, when and how it listeth, is singularly appropriate. And nothing is more accommodating than human credulity. It [198] goes without saying that there are some remarkable ventriloquists among the Bambara, who give such talented support to inanimate objects that the latter become veritable oracles. A piece of horn stuck into the ground or a mute block of wood are thus transformed through such artifice into mediums that answer anyone on any subject.

[808] [154] There are also many highly suggestible individuals who readily fall into wakeful or hypnotic states, during which they reveal hidden things.

787 763 Another practice among the Bambara is the use of the kolon' kala (1) which is specially amenable to hypnotic sugges-

[412]

1. This is the wooden pestle used in all native kitchens to crush grain and condiments.

tion. When a suspicious death requires search for a murderer, the corpse is often used for the discovery. It is carried on the heads of [138] two impressionable young men, who are then assumed to be possessed by the soul of the deceased. The lugubrious remains are rapidly borne through the settlement or the countryside, disregarding obstacles, until it finally stops of itself at a spot where the murderer or some revelatory sign is to be found.

787 A kind of effigy is often used instead of a corpse. This is made of a kolon' kala to which is tied a little bag containing bits of the body (finger-nails, hair, etc.) and which is wrapped in a cloth. The effigy plays the role of the corpse.

787 The kolon' kala is used in the same way to discover stolen or lost objects. In that case it is wrapped in a loincloth belonging to the victim of the theft, along with something equally personal.

What are we to conclude from these divinatory practices? Are oracles based entirely on charlatanism and trickery? This would be a failure to recognize the credulity of the practitioners, most often the first to believe in their own practices.

771 Religion and Magic. There is nothing more involved, incoherent and contradictory than the cult customs of the Bambara. In order to give a clear picture of the essential traits, we shall follow an outline based on the distinction which becomes apparent on close analysis.

It can be stated that these people always honor the manes, the nyana dugu-da-siri and some other nyana, without presuming to impose human will upon them. Indeed, it may even be said that the Bambara make an effort to behave in a manner presumed to be pleasing to them.

However, the majority of the nyana are spirits suborned by man and serving his will.

Finally, there are appropriate rites which make it possible for humans to exploit a portion of the universal energy and to use it as they wish.

771 789 Let us say that the cult of the manes and of the independent nyana are what constitutes the religion of the Bambara, while the subjection of the spirits and the exploitation of universal energy properly constitute magic, which in its most feared form is called sorcery.

This distinction is obviously arbitrary. There is no custom that is not in some measure impregnated with magic, and this is so true that it is uncertain whether one should consider [139] religion to be a sort of purified magic and magic a perversion of religion or even its parasite.

Without seeking to decide this question, we shall simply point out that there is often a clear line of demarcation between religion and magic. All one needs in order to see the difference is to compare the cult of the manes with the practices of sorcery

778 is a virtue which exalts his own faculties to such an extent that
789 it gives him a supernatural power that is terrifying to the uninitiated.

This property of transmission by contact accounts for the veneration which surrounds the possessions of eminent persons and those among the dead who [142] exercised power during their lifetime. Objects especially venerated are those that were in almost constant personal use: clothing, weapons, toilet articles.

The same property of transmission no doubt also accounts for the nature attributed to matter, which has been called continuity. Everything emanating from an object retains the occult energy within it, and, further, anything that "the man who knows" (don-na-ba) does to these detached parts affects the whole from which they came (1). That is why an undigested portion of

● [787]

1. Divination by means of the kolon' kala, previously described, is allied to this belief. The bits and pieces of the deceased act as the dead man himself would do in guiding the bearers of the kolon' kala.

food, if suitably treated by the magician, can spoil the digested portion of the same food. The chronicle tells of how this theory of the continuity of matter was used against Bani. By means of hair and a sandal, stolen from him, the magician paralyzed Bani's clairvoyance and put him at Da's mercy.

791 Magicians. It is the learning of the magician which, so to speak, brings order out of the chaos of the world. In the broadest sense of the word, his art, magic, is a kind of utilization of the occult. It is true that there is no Bambara, from a chief down to the least of the slaves, who does not act as his own magician, but there are specialists and some of them very famous. Besides, not everyone can be a real magician. Natural talents give some individuals the power to penetrate the invisible world and to feel at home there. Some are initiated by genii who have taken a fancy to them, as shown in the chronicle of Biton; others learn the craft from a relative or a well-known magician, either at no cost or at great expense.

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114]

1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

596 614 787 It is the duty of the fa to see to the cult. He projects everything that happens to him personally to the supernatural plane so as to come to conclusions that will guide his own conduct. He discerns in the most ordinary dreams indications of what will please the dead. Furthermore, the people around him point out the signs of divine will that they have observed. If, as happens in great houses, the fa is obliged to turn over part of his responsibility to the family gods to one of his confidantes, the latter will not fail to keep him informed of anything significant that may be revealed.

[577] Thus, daily life is unceasingly dominated by the supernatural, and every important event is conditioned by these beliefs. This is readily seen in all the family institutions: birth, circumcision, marriage, and death.

[577] It follows that the moral behavior of the family is a concern of the fa. Whenever something abnormal or painful occurs, the fa looks into it. Do the dead perhaps have reason to be dissatisfied? Have they been neglected or offended? He questions them, and if he finds confirmation for his suspicions, he at once seeks to appease the manes in whatever way they desire. If the trouble persists, he investigates further, and sometimes everyone in the house is questioned or, if one prefers, made to confess, even infants. Could one of them, moved by ill feeling, have uttered maledictions when invoking the dead?

614 596 783 [578] When the fa himself is ill, this general confession is virtually obligatory. This is because the absolute authority of a fa can hardly fail to arouse hatred, and hatred, a bad counselor, makes people resort to magic to rob the more powerful of life. Fear that the elder's "clairvoyance" will discover the wickedness in the depths of one's soul and punish it usually induces the guilty person to obtain a pardon for his wrongdoing by confessing it, and then everything returns to normal.

596 614 [763] Upon the death of the fa, it is the first duty of his successor to try to discover, by any means, the causes of death and to avenge it if need be.

Everything which the old fa was wont to honor, which forms the spiritual treasure [180] of the family, must also be

769 This is the place where on important occasions the fa
778 receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed
782 not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible, are nevertheless present.

When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ances-
769 tors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his
782 head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own

1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convul-
787 sions and waits for it to fall motionless. Usually the position is regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

794 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this
782 purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the super-natural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the nyana, nor that the boli in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

793 Even though, in theory, familial nyana are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected

1. Ordinarily the word nyana is replaced by the specific name of the nyana, Komo, Nama, Nya, etc.

to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the boli, hence his title of boli-tigi, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

The initiates of higher rank are called dye-n-fa-u, "masters of the truth." The nyana-tigi chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god" (wara-mina-den), becomes the "oracle" (wara-da). The role
787 791 of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance under the influence of the animating spirit, and the wara-da has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2).

2. These dye-n-fa students are called soma-de (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

794 Besides, this submission, if one may call it that, is merely a corollary of the solidarity existing between nyana-den'. This solidarity is shown to the profane whenever litigation arises outside the sphere of the brotherhood; nyana-den' do not [696] hesitate to bear false witness for the sole purpose of helping a guilty co-member evade the sanctions of profane jurisdiction.

For failure to fulfill his obligations or for any other wrong considered reprehensible by the brotherhood, the nyana-den' comes under the jurisdiction of this brotherhood.

Fearing the supernatural retribution which his misdeeds [783] [265] may provoke and seeing portents of it in apparently inexplicable things that cause him pain and surprise, the nyana-den' himself seeks pardon through some kind of expiation, determined by his own intuition alone or by one of the clergy.

On other occasions, the guilty person fails to denounce himself, not merely by deliberate design but sometimes because [787] he is not aware of his wrongdoing and its consequences. In that case it is the wara-da (oracle) who reveals it in a trance.

794 695 The clergy is led, by means of self-accusation, denunciation by witnesses, or accusations based on the most varied imputations, to learn, to investigate, to adjudicate, and to punish the acts of the faithful in material as well as spiritual matters. In the process of carrying out its duties in this respect, the clergy uses every imaginable means of obtaining information and of examination, but the proof of guilt that they particularly want is confession.

The various procedures used to persuade the accused to confess his wrongs may be put under three headings: oath, torture, and divination.

When an oath is taken, the boli is provided with an accessory known as the siri-kun' (knot), to which seven straws are attached. The person taking the oath (kali boli la, "to swear on the boli") then pronounces the usual formula: "May the nyana take my heart and my liver if I lie." When two people exchange this oath in order to vouch for their respective statements, they are said to have "tied the boli" (boli syen'), and it is believed that anyone who perjures himself will be put to death

794 by the god. It is conceded, however, that a perjurer may re-
695 deem himself by gifts and sacrifices whose nature and value are decided by the clergy.

Torture includes the most diverse types of moral and physical constraint thought to be efficacious in getting a confession: usually flogging, imprisonment, starvation, mutilation, and other tortures, often horrible. A method that often succeeds and that is commonly used is to offer up the unknown guilty party to the wrath of the nyana; it is not at all rare for the guilty person to confess at the first signs of discomfort due to auto-suggestion. It is so firmly established that the wrath of the nyana is always implacable and terrible that innocent persons, accused only for the sake of exploiting them, have been known to confess abominable crimes which they [266] never committed, for instance, in cases of accusation of sorcery.

● [787] Divination comes to the support of the inquiry, and the deity's revelations are combined with endless spying among the members.

It goes without saying that these various methods of inquiry are not used alone; they are combined so as to provide mutual support.

On the basis of findings made in this way, the clergy passes judgment and has the sentence carried out in a despotic and often mysterious manner (1).

1. Indeed, most of the brotherhoods owe their terrifying reputations to the fact that sentences resulting in death or disappearance have been carried out by ways and agents who remain mysterious.

794 The penalties are varied and arbitrary; the importance
696 of a misdemeanor is not determined in advance on the basis of specific characteristics. Rather, everything depends on the clergy's interest in the case, and this interest is influenced by the most appalling intrigues. Therefore, even though the accused is guilty of the most terrible crimes, he may escape punishment entirely provided he can satisfy the demands of the

794 This boli-den'-fa is provided with the usual boli-de:
[778] kana, korti, siri-kun', etc. [284]
[346] A hut with a conical roof serves as temple (Nya-bon').
An orchestra accompanies the ceremonies; it includes
[534] a kind of harp, made by the natives and peculiar to the Nya, plus large numbers of the usual drums, bells, and trumpets.

Since the Nya is acquired by purchase, the high priest (Nya-tigi) is theoretically the person who contributed most generously to this purchase. The office may also be attained by inheritance or by election. The truly religious role, however, is that of the wara-mina-den', the medium through which the god reveals his will or his desires and who is, therefore, the oracle (wara-da) of the Nya. A certain amount of training by appropriate methods is necessary to acquire the degree of extra-lucidity claimed by the wara-mina-den', and that is why they are recruited by co-optation.

794 Under the influence of the Nya, the wara-mina-den' falls
●787 into a trance. His speech, hesitant and strange, is incomprehensible to the common people. The Nya-tigi then approaches to receive and to interpret the oracle. The inspiration of the wara-mina-den' may be spontaneous or it may be provoked and deliberately sought by him. For example, when a person dies, the wara-mina-den' questions the Nya, either at the request of the interested parties or of his own volition. For this purpose, he retires to the temple (Nya-bon'), concentrates on the point to be clarified, and after meditating, withdraws (1). He then sometimes

1. These details were given to me by a wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara.

falls asleep, and while he sleeps, the Nya reveals the truth to him in a dream. On other occasions the wara-mina-den' falls into a trance, and the spirit speaks through his mouth. One way or another, it is learned whether the death is to be attributed to the Nya and, if so, why. Or it is made plain that it is the work of the suba and under what form, human or otherwise, they are hiding. Or, finally, it is learned whether some other nyana struck down the deceased.

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

[783] 1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

[731] The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

[691] 2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

771 Ngalla through his priests, the marabouts. At other times he
787 thinks he will get into Ngalla's good graces by taking part in the great Moslem festivals and by imitating the visible rites (4)

> 4. In the tale of the Hyena, given later, there is an example of this mimicry in the way in which those who follow the Hyena each pretend to be the nyana discovered by the Hyena (see Chapter 7 [not translated]).

of the faithful. He has not the faintest doubt but that he can produce the same effects as they do.

So it is that the pagan, deriving from Islam whatever his own concepts can make use of, "Sudanizes" it in the process. As a result, between the two poles of Islam and paganism, there exists an infinity of intermediate states which link the two and which, depending on the angle of observation, sometimes look like an Islamization of the Sudanese and, at other times, like a Sudanization of Islam.

Father Niany, of the blacksmiths' caste, was one of those [333] individuals who, being versed in the practice of native occultism, consider Islam as a rival Hermetism until the day when they realize that it can provide them with useful new magic power. Many are the blacksmiths, magicians like Niany, who have become Moslems for the purpose of getting their hands on the arsenal of magic which Islam brings into these lands.

787 So it is that all the native brotherhoods have adopted
[177] divination by geomancy which was introduced by the Moslems and there is not a Bambara who does not on occasion consult the geomancer, known as laturudala or kenyelala (1) or the

> 1. Derived from kenye meaning "sand," and la meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the sand."

787 177 bugurigala (2). These three words are sufficient in themselves

> 2. Derived from buguri meaning "dust," and da meaning "to place" or "to write on." Therefore it means "the one who writes on the dust."

to illustrate the process of Sudanization. Although the first comes from a corruption of the Arabic word el tereb (earth), the other two are strictly Bambara in all respects. Besides, the manner in which the natives have altered the practice of geomancy is an illustration of the same process.

771 787 It may therefore be concluded that, in certain respects, Islam has strengthened paganism. For example, the pagans commonly believe that an illiterate geomancer, who is nevertheless an expert in this type of divination, will obtain the same results as a learned marabout who is guided by the book of Er Zenati. As a result, a well-known laturadala enjoys special prestige because of the fact that his prognostications are corroborated by a book, and the same fact accounts in part for the influence of the priests of the brotherhoods.

We are thus able to verify the contacts between Islam and the paganism of the Bambara who are the subject of this study.

693 The historical tales related in the foregoing show the continuous relations which existed between the native chiefs and the pious and renowned marabouts. Whenever a legal dispute arose which could not be settled by pagan arbitration, the last recourse was an appeal for judgment or conciliation to a marabout, who was always sought out and greeted with deference. Mamari, Tonmassa, Ngolo and Ma-n-son's sons all had occasion to make such appeals in some most embarrassing situations.

[334] Further, on occasions when they hoped to bring off some questionable deal or to improve their prospects, the chiefs were also wont to call on a marabout. Mamari did so against the Massa-si Foro-koro and so did Ngolo when he was anxious to make sure that his fame would survive him.

In matters of judicial arbitration, it appears that the marabout derives his authority rather more, perhaps, from his

212 801 by numbers, and notably by ten, which may be obtained, among other ways and if it's a question of representing the Creator, by adding the first four numbers, or by adding the number five to itself." [776] Ten is the numerical symbol of Faro (god of water); it symbolizes what is just, true, perfect, and complete.

The symbolism of numbers is used in divination: a first [787] group of eight signs, called the secret count, reproduces the seven first numbers which, according to a Bambara myth, were engraved in space at the instant that the Creator by his word formed the universe. They contain the whole universe.

These numerical signs were ritually traced on the most varied occasions.

[802] Finally, we must note the existence of the sign for "nothing," fu gundo, zero, which stands at the beginning of a series of 196 numerical signs used by those who practice arithomancy.

The word Mandé, of central significance for 44 peoples, may be interpreted, according to some, as manin (the secret name for ten), number of unity and of the cultural community.

F. Writing

212 For everyday use, the Bambara have adopted arabic characters, called by them "writing of the Blacks." In fact, only those who have studied in the Marabouts' schools know how to read or write them. No written literature, properly speaking, exists. A 538 large store of traditions, epics, tales, legends, songs, and proverbs is transmitted orally from generation to [17] generation by professional storytellers, the griot. Moreover, the whole sum of sci- 867 entific, juridical, ethical, and practical knowledge is taught orally 868 in the course of daily life or during long years of initiation. Certain old masters renowned for their learning are consulted from far distances when a chief is in doubt on a point of tradition.

212 Nevertheless, signs do exist for a secret writing that the priests, the heads of families, or blacksmiths draw on the sanctuaries, on masks, furniture, clothing, cabin walls, or in the sand.

212 For the Bambara, things exist by signs. These signs have at- 812 tached themselves to things, calling them to consciousness and to the attention of man.

805 the angles represents 90 days (the year, for the Bambara, is 360 days).
815 The symbols are not merely mathematical; they form part of the daily life of the society. [18] The zigzags are a characteristic theme [531] in the decoration of pottery, weapons, tools, sanctuaries, and houses. One finds them in agricultural techniques and in ritual dance figures. The universal rhythms of the earth and sky echo through all the activities of man and society. (1) Finally, another series of 16 signs

212 [787]

1. Id., "Conception de l'écliptique chez les Dogons et les Bambara" [The Dogon and Bambara Conception of the Ecliptic]. [Ed., Africa, 1951.]

is habitually used in geomancy. It is interesting to note that these signs were used in a practical manner for correspondence. The Bambara chiefs used multiple combinations of them to send each other messages.

G. Local Diversities

197 Given the extent and the diversity of the regions where Bambara is spoken, it is no wonder one notices differences in pronunciation, and even in structure and vocabulary, from one province to another. At Kaarta the speech is not the same as at Ségou, and a Bambara of Ségou has trouble understanding a Bambara of Bougouni. This is due partly to the influence of other languages which are in contact with Bambara and which ultimately alter and modify it, and partly to the normal evolution of language within a group separated for centuries from its place of origin. It is interesting to note that in the Bougouni circle the conservatives in speech are the old men, while the women are the evolutionary element.

191 Traditionally, Ségou was considered the center for the most elegant Bambara speech. Before the conquest, children were sent to Ségou to learn the purest Bambara.

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut); Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets. It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. Practice had it that the [787] traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. To each state which is crossed, the [651] caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

Before the French conquest,

712 Bambara villages were fortified. They were protected by a triple enclosure of clay blocks following a line of beams that sheltered the sentinels. The first wall enclosed the village and the surrounding gardens, the second circled the interior of the village, and the third surrounded the chief's houses. These walls could be as high as five meters and as wide as two meters at the base. They had a ditch in front of them and were re-inforced by steps. Considerable ruins of these fortifications may still be seen in the Kourolàmini at Tènintu (Bougouni circle).

342 House construction. (1) Throughout the Sudan, house construction is carried out during the dry season. The same is true for repairs, except for the most urgent caused by damage from rains, streaming waters, violent winds, or by the ravages of termites.

1. Information, in part, given by Moussa Traoré, from the village of Gouani (Diemandougou canton), Bamako circle.

342 361 787 778 Choice of the site. The choice is often made near a temporary or permanent watercourse where wells may be sunk. A soothsayer or Marabout is next consulted, who reveals the existence of a spirit whose favorite place is the cailcedra; if the spirit is benevolent, the installation is authorized, and the sacred tree becomes the altar of the collectivity. It is bathed with periodic sacrifices.

342 Types of habitation. 1. The round hut with thatched roof (tuba bo); 2 the square or rectangular hut (bili) with flat roof.

Round hut. The man drives a stake to which he attaches a cord 1.50 meters long at the most, which is also tied to the head of a hoe. The man circles the stake and traces a circumference that [701] will be the scheme of the house. No foundation is laid. A series of double pickets (kassassin) is set up around the circumference. A bamboo strip is passed in and out between the double stakes, and this basketwork is raised from the ground up to a height of about two meters.

When the cylinder forming the walls of the base is finished, a door is cut, facing south, 25 centimeters from the ground and 1.50 meters high. One then plasters with banco, that is, with earth dug not far from the hut by the young people and made into a paste with a mixture of fonio straw, cow dung, and water drawn by the women. The roof is constructed on the ground. A circumference equal to that

534 "The form of Bambara musical instruments is governed by a
771 symbolism which enters into the metaphysical and religious system of this population."

a. The chief instrument is the drum, the tabale, reserved to kings and chiefs. The mythical prototype of this instrument was made of copper, a primordial metal whose vibration is likened to that of light, of sound, of water, and of speech in this population.

The instrument today is composed of two parts: a square wooden frame covered with goat's skin, which forms the body of the drum, and a detachable apron of engraved wood, in the form of a half-moon on one of its faces, which is attached to one of the drum's sides. This apron is covered with plaques of engraved and adorned wood, and, on the periphery of the rounded face, with a strap of leather trimmed with copper rings. This apron represents an ear which is at the same time that of the spirit of the air, that of the masters of sound, and that of the king. The copper rings are replicas of those worn in the ears by everybody; their role is to transmit sounds and rhythms to the eardrum.

The wooden drumstick used to beat the instrument is unusually long and anthropomorphous in form. It has a bell at one end. It represents Koumabana, the first of the eight ancestors in the Bambara pantheon who received "the Word" ...

b. The anthropomorphism of the harp [guitar?], ngoni, is very plain in the minds of its users.

The instrument's rectangular frame represents the mask of Koumabana, the ancestor who received the Word; the two side pieces are his eyes; the sound hole, his nose and his respiration; the tailpiece, his mouth and his teeth; the strings, eight in number, his words. It is also the image of his tomb, and the two rods that cross it represent the second and third ancestors who accompanied him in death. The frame also represents the face of the seer and his tomb, the two rods being the two millet stalks put in the ground with the cadaver. At the end of the handle, copper bells have the same role, technical and religious at the same time, as those attached to the apron on the drum described above.

534 Each sound given by each of the eight strings is a prayer.
787 The seer plucks the strings separately, following their rank and according to the importance of the questioner and of the questions he

534 asks: modê (grandson) for unimportant subjects, hunting, voyages;
787 fadê (son of the father) for individual life, physical and moral; fa (father) for the future, destiny, the public life of a man, his authority, his rule; fakoroke (father's older brother) for the plantings, the rains, for fortune; fa dogone (father's younger brother) for germination of the cereals; ba (mother) for everything concerning the women; [107] faso (father's house) for everything concerning the familial abode or the absent.

534 The principal efficacy of the harp is in bringing order, by the rhythms and sounds emanating from it, to all that is troubled in the march of events.

The harp presides at sacrifices, at cathartic or medical rites, at purifications, at apotropaic rites, at solitary meditations. Its high notes are celestial and symbolic of completeness; the low notes connote terrestrial things and incompleteness. Its playing commands arrivals and departures, proliferations and diminutions, calls to order; its presence at the edge of a pool, where it had been silently placed, is assurance of appeasement.

The harpist, before beginning his service, puts his mouth to
[788] the orifice in the frame and murmurs to the master of the Word: "Now it is your turn, organize the world." (1)

1. Passim, Griaule, "Symbole des arts africains" [Symbol of the Africain Arts].

533 Music, dance, and song are intimately linked in the religious
534 movement. Thus it is that a djo of the Samaké (Bougouni circle) is composed entirely of musicians who form an orchestra in which the whole scale is represented by eight different principal instruments, which are types of a multitude of others. There is one n'ganian-ba, an instrument made by hollowing out a trough in a tree trunk, which gives a very deep sound when rubbed; it is the bass which gives the cadence. Two to three tioro give a sharper sound; four to six tioun, a still sharper sound, and there are as many as ten fere, the instrument
533 with the sharpest sound. Finally, a host of N'ganian dyeli begin the
292 music as the griot quiets the crowd at the start. All these instruments have the form of a pirogue. In addition, the orchestra includes two singers and two dancers. Everyone wears masks, bonnets with crests

whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given everywhere: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraor-
●787 dinary during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
[262] pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their husbands and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said -- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumbness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the caterpillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would provide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is another force or power. He sets the second power against the first to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

lineages, they usually abandon such a taboo as soon as they leave the village, and if, because of the habit they have acquired they abide by it until their death, their children give it up.

Carrying his organization into the world of invisible beings, the Bambara endows the latter also with tné, or taboos, and make these his own. Not only are the sacred woods taboo, together with all they contain, but there are also ways of acting and behaving which displease the spirits, and some animals have the capability of making them angry. When a woman comes back from the forest with her fagot of wood on her head, she must unbind it before entering the village or do so on the public square. In some places shoes are removed at the door of the entrance hut, or b'lon through which the village is entered; elsewhere the people take off their caps; and no one ever whistles in the lanes without incurring the hatred of the invisible beings. Partridges, which are numerous in the fields around the walls, must never get into the village except dead and plucked, and children who catch them in their nets never break this custom. [187] If by mischance a partridge flies across the village and cackles in passing, all the population is in turmoil, and for three nights thereafter men, women, and children sleep under the stars. Often, /25/ depending on the oracles of the sorcerer, they even leave their homes and build them again a short distance away.

The genii called boli are the terror of women, children, and the uninitiated, who cannot touch any object used in the ritual and who may not enter their sacred woods and their sanctuaries. The boli (1) have tné, which are taboo for their owners and those that

1. The term boli denotes any evil fetish, and hence any object used by an evil spirit or demon as his dwelling. See Chap. VII, 1.

sacrifice to them, and which sometimes also become taboo for their children. One of the strangest is the tné or taboo of the Bara, which is millet beer, or d'lo. Its owner and the person sacrificing to him must avoid drinking beer if possible, and if the habit is too established

778 comparisons with themselves, they have thought that certain indi-
791 viduals could also create understandings in the world of spirits, and thus become the spirits' equals and even command them and make them obey. They firmly believe that such is the case, and although there are many sorcerers, there are still more people who maneuver to attain this position. Possession of the occult sciences cannot be acquired by anyone who wishes, however. The diploma or certificate of competence, cannot be obtained without swallowing certain mixtures of ashes, intestines, and blood, and certain repulsive eyewashes, such as the rheum from dogs' eyes, must be slid under the eyelids in order to see the invisible beings. In addition, unless a man is initiated by his father or brother, he must expect to pay a goodly sum. This is an art that pays, and generously! Every aspirant must also have a good memory in order to engrave in his mind the formulas, gestures, and rites; only the intelligent succeed.

791 The competence of sorcerers is far from equal, nor do they
787 proceed in an identical manner. Some read the future and discover secrets in the entrails of hens; others play with knuckle bones, pebbles, or cowrie shells (1) which they throw on the ground and count and

[436]

1. /Torn page/ white /shells/ used as money.

recount, or trace cabalistic signs on scattered ashes, moving the forefinger back and forth, as in a game of Goose /a game played with dice on a board/. Some work with a gourd three quarters full of water, which they set on a n'gô (a kind of napkin ring or bracelet made of braided roots) washed frequently in the blood of /sacrificial/ victims. This procedure is the least complicated. The gourd is tipped right and left, forward and backward, until it sits firmly on the n'gô and can no longer be moved without carrying the stand along. Then the operator need only flick it three times with the middle finger of the right hand while stating the petitions..., and the spirit will answer in a soft murmur which those present can hear, but which he alone
791 understands. In a word, the /35/ good sorcerer stands out above the

774 the French a phantom. It may be regarded as a kind of fluid, having some degree of consciousness and capable of escaping from the animate or inanimate object to which it belongs, without becoming completely separated from it, and giving that object a shadow, bearing its external form and outline, as well as the imprint of the fear, sorrow, joy, and sadness which may be reflected on a person's face. A dja may also escape and separate and detach itself completely, but nevertheless retain the external form of the object which it left. When a dja leaves its object, it stays in the neighborhood or goes wandering far off, and the being that it has left sees this double or merely feels it, or may even be unconscious of its existence.

774 828 For the Bambara, a dream is not a product of the imagination; it is a reality. They say that while they are asleep their dja sometimes escape and wander far away, and there they actually see and chat with friends, attend real feasts on real drinking bouts. A person is not surprised to awaken after such a dream with a dry throat and an empty stomach, for what he saw, drank, and ate were the dja of things and people, nothing more tenuous or imponderable, and only his dja saw, drank, ate, and enjoyed himself.

●787 A dream is quite a deceiver, and its external realization is unusual, but it does sometimes occur. Certain Negroes are famous because they know how to interpret dreams, a knowledge not available to everyone, or again because they know how to dream and prophesy /43/ the more or less immediate future. They have a booth which is fairly well patronized; people consulted them and bring them cowrie shells. There are even people who run and tell them about every interesting story they dream, and since these people take precautions afterward not to miss some predicted piece of luck or to avoid a misfortune that threatens, they are aided in the realization of their dreams without suspecting it, and these results constribute not a little toward fortifying their false beliefs. /44/

754 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be con-
674 tent, in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever
/52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its
[778] dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a boli is manifold, and horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his sirikoun with blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola nut.

754 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the
674 ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down
●787 and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later, for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at least 160 cauri, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air, and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the boli a blara boli koro, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task themselves as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up, telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

000 I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

776 Although the individual worship of the lesser genii by one per-
782 son or family is seldom public -- except sometimes temporarily, it nonetheless involves an enormous waste of /millet/ flour, kola nuts, cotton, cowrie shells, etc. Nevertheless, there are very few sacrifices in these offerings; most frequently, if not always, they are saraka, or alms, and a kind of tax or tribute since they are obligatory.

782 They are, in fact, obligatory alms, paid by an individual, a
791 family, or a whole quarter of a village, upon the command of a sorcerer. Some sorcerers who have renown or want to acquire it manage to prescribe these taxes for an entire village and, sometimes, even for a whole region. The occurence is not unusual; I have seen it happen every year. A shrewd operator from Bélé Koun in the circle of Sikasso, crosses the Bani in every dry season, and there is not a village in the circle of Ségou but feels called upon to hand hens and cowrie shells over to him and, in addition, afterwards to take a large contribution to one of the nearby crossroads. In spite of his youth -- he is twenty-five or thirty at most -- he is said to learn everything [787] by searching hens' entrails and crushing their viscera between his fingers. He makes profit by predicting terrible calamities everywhere. All his knowledge is summed up in the following words: "The genii are displeased, offer a saraka and offer it quickly, for if you do not, all children under three years old will die... goats, cows, horses, and sheep will die... springs will dry up... the karité butter will fail..., etc." In one place the words are those of a hyena, in another, those of a cow, and farther away it is a wild pig that speaks. And the dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water) is spread and the blood of hens flows in streams. In short, the people are always expected to give to the fetishes and the sorcerers, and to give everything. Some occasionally balk and do not want to obey. The orders of the sorcerer become urgent, his prophesies more terrible than ever; at the end of his patience, he may spit out insults and /107/ curses, and then everyone comes to offer the saraka. Even Moslems let themselves be taken in.

782 In Bambara eyes, the saraka never has the character of a sacrifice. As I explained at length in speaking of the worship of God, it is always

621 The palavers and deliberations are long, but the choice is a
793 happy one; the old man chosen as gnéna-n-sonnaba always has the
555 slyness and guile characteristic of the Bambara type. Patient and likeable, he will know how to be just and impartial in disputes, diplomatic and sufficiently master of himself to say only what he intends to. He will know how to acquire the reputation of an upright man who does not know theft or falsehood.

621 Elected for life to hold both civil and religious power, he is
793 truly the head of the village, the dougoutigi. His position is hereditary; it passes from brother to brother and, when there are none, goes by right to his oldest son. The one who is to succeed him becomes his aide (siéré), and the heads of families (gouatigi-ou) compose his council; they are always summoned when a question is to be handled or a decision made.

The Choice of the dasiri fetish and its sacred mount

776 The new village has a head, his aide, and its council; it is
778 organized. Now they must find out the whereabouts of the spring,
787 rock, or tree where lives the protecting spirit, the dougou dasiri (1),

1. Dougou dasiri: /dougou/, "village"; da, "mouth," "entrance"; siri, "bind."

who fastens the entrance to the village and watches over it. For this knowledge the people appeal to a sorcerer; he has intimate contact with the spirits, knows their ways and customs, and understands their language.

There are many sorcerers, and they do not all work in the same way. One discovers his oracles in the entrails of a hen, a second traces cabalistic signs on ashes, a third endlessly moves little stones, bones, and cowrie shells, counting them again and again. To locate the dasiri, people have recourse to the flélikéla (2) diviner, who

2. Flélikéé, "to look attentively, curiously."

776 works with a gourd three quarters full of water.
778 When he has received his honorarium of 40 cowrie shells, which
787 he takes in both hands, he places beside him in the dust his little /117/ gift, consisting of two kola nuts, a few hens, or better, a small billy goat. He asks about the place chosen for the new village and has it described to him down to the smallest detail. Then he takes down a dirty n'go (1) on which he places a gourd which he tips slowly right

1. A ring made of braided roots bound with cotton thread, which is covered with a thick layer of blood.

and left, forward and backward, to give it a firm position on its stand. Having done this, he sums up for the spirits the conversation which he has had, and then, with eyes afire and holding his breath, he gives the gourd three flicks with the middle finger of his right hand. They say that a soft murmur, a murmur which is none other than the voices of the genii, is noticed by all present. They hear without understanding, but the sorcerer knows these voices and when he rises it is with a tone of authority that he names the dasiri and the animal which will be its mount.

In the province of Ségou the dasiri is a tree; the tamarind, the false cedar, and the baobab are the preferred trees. The sacred mount, also called dasiri, is a snake, an iguana, a rat, a donkey, etc., but most frequently it is a billy goat.

778 Enthronement of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, priest of the dasiri and
621 dougoutigi, head of the village

Our Blacks establish the new village and build their huts. Near the fetish tree each family sets up its mortars for grinding sorghum, places its hearths, and installs its kitchens. Bows, guns, and farming implements are hung on the branches of the dasiri, and while the work of settling continues, meals are eaten and dances held in its shade, and in the evening when the moon is shining it is near the tree that they finally stretch out to sleep.

782 gné-foula (3), and from the wokolo, a little dwarf genie. He then

3. "Two eyes," i.e., people with second sight.

asks for strength and health for all, for children who will be healthy, strong, and vigorous, and for wives. "Preserve us," he adds in closing, "from wicked people, discord, quarrels, and fights, from the rage of women who easily fall under the power of 'satan,' and from sickness; finally, give us rain, without which a harvest is not possible." Then he cuts the throat of a goat or a white sheep, and while he reddens the bark of the sacred tree with blood, he repeats his pleas and requests, and he says them again a third time while offering the kola nut.

At individual sacrifices nothing in the formula is changed. However, if the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered wants a special blessing or favor, he tells the sacrificer about it, and the latter states the request then and there. /121/

When the head of a family cannot be present at a sacrifice, his substitute gives the reason for his absence. Two witnesses then come to testify that the reason given is the true one and that there is no ill will whatever on the part of the absentee.

Sometimes a great clamor arises during the sacrifice, and one would say that people were fighting under the sacred tree, or at least arguing.

782 Nothing of the sort is happening; the crowd is crying out against
787 the fetish and interceding for an unfortunate whose sacrifice has not been accepted. It is known that this has happened when the hen does not fall on its back or its side with its feet in the air. The kola nut gives the genie's answer much more definitely. The sacrificer cuts it in two, holds the two pieces together between thumb and fore-finger, and having touched the ground with them twice saying, "Tell us if you accept the sacrifice," he throws them at the foot of the sacred tree. If the two pieces fall with the pulp on top, no further doubt is possible; the sacrifice is accepted, and he repeats the same procedure again, saying, "Since you accept the sacrifice, tell us if

you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation, may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The korétigi, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kâra ma ("man of

304 seven years and has a strictly religious character (5). The gnéna-

5. This ceremony takes place only once every seven years. The girls are always fairly big when their chests are tattooed.

sonnaba, surrounded by his council, the gouatigi, sacrifices to the dasiri; a hen is offered to the shades of the ancestors, the family boli are /173/ taken out of their dirty skins and sprinkled with blood, and all the village makes merry. People go in procession to the place 304 where the blacksmith tattooer is, and as long as the operation lasts 533 the women clap their hands, marking time for the blacksmith, who sings as he operates, and together they join in the chorus.

The tattoo, the chief distinctive mark of the people, is made 304 with a knife having one or two blades. The two-bladed knife cer- 413 tainly makes a tattoo which stands out more and has more detail, but it also requires more skill on the part of the operator, and, doubtless for this reason, it is relatively unusual.

At present a great many Bambara no longer wear the mark of 314 their tribe on their cheeks. The Moslems have contributed greatly to the abolition of this painful practice. Before the arrival of Europeans, under the reigns of Ahmadou and Madani, very severe punishments were inflicted on anyone who tattooed himself or had his children tattooed. One should not think, however, that tattooing was ever a [187] strict and unqualified requirement; in this connection everything is entrusted to the decision of diviners and sorcerers, of djiné, or gnéna, genii, and especially of the family boli, which are consulted and sacrificed to in order to find out whether or not it is necessary to wear the marks of the tribe. Thus it is not unusual to find that some members of a family are tattooed and others are not, and that those who are not tattooed have their children tattooed, while the tattooed refrain from doing so. This ceremony is carried out every seven years, and the head of the family may be away when the blacksmith tattooer comes by, so that the sacrifices do not take place, and the tattooing of the children is put off until seven years later. When they have

584 sterile? And if he should be one of those sensualists so numerous
593 among us, and, bored after having enjoyed her, should drive her away and reject her?" He trembles and wants to know what the future holds both for him and for her, and goes to consult the diviners.

584 Two and often three diviners are consulted. If they all agree in
593 testifying that the suitor is of good character, that divorce is not to
787 be feared, and that the child will become the mother of healthy, strong, and vigorous children who will perpetuate her people and her blood, he finds joy again. He tells the verdict to both his wife and his daughter, he imparts his decision to the head of the village and the council of elders, and /202/ without any delay, freed as he is from all fear, he notifies the suitor that the doors of his home are open to him.

584 At this announcement the suitor chooses a fat hen from his hen
787 house, takes one or two kola nuts from his store, and again the fourouboloma tigi, the guardian of the wedding gifts, starts on his way, for this time he must find out whether the family boli, and sometimes the shades of its ancestors, are opposed to the proposed union (1).

1. If some occurrence later causes the engagement to be broken, or if there is a marriage followed by divorce, it does not enter his mind that the diviners were mistaken. The whole responsibility falls on the head of an enemy, who through hatred or jealousy has found a way to disrupt everything. It is almost always someone unknown, which is fortunate.

584 The father of the little girl takes down his goatskin, or often the
787 skin of a wild animal, a frightful, dirty foroko, the tabernacle of the
778 family boli; he sprinkles them with the blood of the hen and then spits a piece of chewed kola nut on them. If he does not have family boli -- an unusual situation -- he sacrifices to his ancestors on the doorsill of the entry hut, or b'lon, and on the kârâ, if he owns one.

584 787 778

A kârâ is an earthern bas-relief inside the b'lon, or entry hut, which very crudely depicts a woman and a man and is used as an altar.

When the sacrifice is accepted -- that is, if the feathered biped has the fortunate idea of not dying with its wings spread and its breast on the ground, and if the pieces of kola nut, cut in two, which are thrown on the boli or the kârâ, fall with the rounded part on the ground and the pulp on top (2) -- there is an unequivocal "yes" on

2. A procedure which is repeated up to three times in case of failure.

the part of the family, and all hearts rejoice. As to the fouroubolomatigi, he delightedly sucks his piece of kola nut, he savors his piece of the hen, and the scene of the sacrifice is far from his memory. Yet he trembled when, crouched before his boli or the kârâ, altar of his ancestors, the father-in-law cut the throat of the victim and threw down the kola nut, saying in a solemn and cavernous voice: "We have consulted the diviners, and they all agree in praising the suitor; if they are to be believed, he is worthy of our daughter. But you, what do you think of this union? If it is to be /203/ happy, if divorce is not to be feared, if it is to be fertile, accept my sacrifice, I pray you. In that case, grant them wealth, long life, many children, and peace. This hen and the kolas are indeed for the sacrifice, and it is a true sacrifice which the suitor offers you through my mediation."

This manner of accepting or rejecting a suitor is most ingenious! Since everything is referred to the decision of the diviners, the boli, and the shades of ancestors, any dispute on the part of a rejected man is impossible, no quarrel arises between the two families, and when a more fortunate suitor obtains the little girl's hand, he need not fear the hate, rancor, or vengeance of his predecessor for he has nothing to do with the latter's misfortune.